

# DISCIPLINARY IDEAS

Parental discipline is an issue that will be different with each family. Consider some of the following ideas but use what you feel will best motivate your child.

- For younger children, ask them to identify several items of value to them (e.g. toys, stuffed animals, blankets, etc.), perhaps one for each year old the child is. Explain to the child that you will be taking those items and storing them away. Each day following, return one item to the child and spend about 15 minutes explaining why you are concerned, what you expect the child to do in the future, and explore their feelings. Young children best understand the loss of items that are valuable to THEM. The loss of a home or even lives is often too vast for them to understand.
- For older children, give them responsibility that relates to the misbehavior. Perhaps they should help clean up the remains of the fire. Another idea is to have them make up a safety list (that includes fire safety) that responsible people in your home should follow. Also, have them do a home fire inspection to determine if your home is safe from all sources of fire.
- Make the discipline realistic and achievable. A never-ending timeout leaves children with no way to redeem themselves. It also fails to teach them anything about what you want them to do in the future.
- Have an amnesty day. This is a day when turning in hidden matches or lighters will not result in punishment. If children know they will not get in trouble when they turn these in, they are more likely to do so. With younger children, offer a reward, perhaps a certain amount of money for each match or lighter. Now they are being rewarded for doing the right thing rather than just being punished for the wrong thing.
- Never underestimate the power of hugs, kisses, pats on the back and a warm smile. Think about how you feel when your child offers you these things.

*Keep in mind, some children will not respond to the tips offered above. When they do not, this may indicate a more serious problem that will take more serious action. Utah State Fire Marshal's Office Youth Firesetting and Juvenile Arson Program can help you when this is the case.*